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FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4040  
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 0339  
RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA 0042  
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT 0068  
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHDC  
RUEAWJB/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC  
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC  
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 12 ABIDJAN 000138

SIPDIS

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DEPARTMENT FOR G/TIP, G, INL, DRL, PRM, AF/RSA; PASS TO  
USAID

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KCRM](#) [PHUM](#) [KWMN](#) [SMIG](#) [KFRD](#) [ASEC](#) [PREF](#) [ELAB](#) [PGOV](#)

PREL, IV

SUBJECT: COTE D'IVOIRE: 2008 TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT

REF: SECSTATE 2731

11. (SBU) Cote d'Ivoire is beginning to emerge from a five-year crisis during which the country was divided in two, with government forces controlling the southern half of the country and rebel forces, known as the New Forces (NF), in control of the north. President Laurent Gbagbo and New Forces leader Guillaume Soro signed the Ouagadougou Political Agreement (OPA) in March 2007 and a new government was formed in April 2007 with Soro as Prime Minister. Although implementation of the OPA, which is designed to be a roadmap out of the crisis, has begun and the President and Prime Minister have said that they are committed to holding presidential elections in 2008, the political situation has not yet returned to normal. The economy has stagnated as a result of the political crisis and government revenues have failed to keep up with rising expenditures, creating severe budgetary pressures. Despite these challenges, the government has demonstrated political will and dedicated some limited resources to combating TIP. In addition, available information indicates that the overall magnitude of international trafficking to Cote d'Ivoire has decreased since civil war broke out in 2002, because of the partition of the country, tighter security at borders, and decreased economic opportunities.

12. (SBU) OVERVIEW OF COTE D'IVOIRE'S ACTIVITIES TO ELIMINATE TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

1A. Cote d'Ivoire is primarily a country of destination for international trafficking of women and children. It is also a transit country and a country of origin to countries in Europe. Boys are trafficked from Ghana, Mali, and Burkina Faso to work in the agricultural sector, particularly, cocoa, coffee, pineapple and rubber plantations; from Guinea to work in the mining sector; from Togo to work in construction; and from Benin to work in carpentry. Girls are trafficked from Ghana, Togo and Benin to work as domestic servants and street vendors. They are also trafficked from several other countries, including primarily Nigeria as well as China, Ukraine and the Philippines, to work as waitresses and prostitutes in street-side restaurants.

Domestic trafficking for labor on plantations, low wage service labor and sexual exploitation is more prevalent than international trafficking and it occurs in both the former NF-controlled zone as well as the government zone. Girls are

more at risk of being trafficked domestically than boys because of their lower school enrollment and increasing poverty in families due to the civil conflict that divided the country. Girls are trafficked from the former NF-held territories to Abidjan and other cities in the south of the country to work as domestic servants and waitresses and are frequently pushed into prostitution by their employers. Women and girls are more at risk of being trafficked than boys.

Sources of available information on TIP include local and international NGOs, the police and defense forces, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Family and Social Services, and other embassies. We have no reports of adult men being trafficked in or to Cote d'Ivoire. Internally, victims are more likely to come from the north, and to a lesser extent, from the west, than from southern or eastern Cote d'Ivoire.

There are no reliable estimates as to the extent or magnitude of the trafficking problem in Cote d'Ivoire, but NGOs and international organizations like Interpol believe that trafficking of women for sexual exploitation is increasing while child trafficking is starting to decrease. Several studies to determine the scope of the problem were completed in 2006. The GTZ/LTTE (German Technical Cooperation Office for the Fight against Trafficking and the Worst Forms of Child labor) and Cote d'Ivoire Prosperite, a local NGO which provides social and health services to young girls trafficked into prostitution, carried out a study entitled "Child Prostitution and the Trafficking Networks in the Districts of Yopougon and Adjame in 2006." The study, published in

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February 2007, revealed that 85 percent of the girls were minors and that more Ivoirian girls have now been trafficked into prostitution than foreign girls, a likely consequence of the political crisis in Cote d'Ivoire (53 percent of the girls in the study were Ivoirian, 33 percent Nigerian and the rest were of other nationalities). The study also revealed that 48 percent of the girls lived with their pimps, 17 percent with their parents and 23 percent with friends. Twenty-nine percent had never attended school, 38 percent had attended primary school and 28 percent had attended secondary school. The study also assessed the living conditions of the girls. Sixty-nine percent worked every day of the week and had more than 10 clients a day and their pimps kept most of the money they earned. The girls in the study also lived in environments plagued by alcohol, drug abuse and rape and were under constant threat of physical violence and police roundups.

1B. Cote d'Ivoire remains a source and destination country for child labor trafficking and a source and transit country for trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation. Women and girls were trafficked from Nigeria and Ghana mainly for sexual exploitation in Abidjan and larger towns. A smaller number of women and children are trafficked from North Africa, the Ukraine, China, and the Philippines to become prostitutes. Sometimes, women are promised jobs in restaurants or hair salons but are then forced into prostitution. Frequently, these girls and women come to Abidjan and its surrounding areas and work for a few days or months in order to generate enough money to pay for tickets and identity documents and to reimburse traffickers. If they earn enough money and if the trafficker allows it, the women go on to other destinations, usually European countries such as Spain, the Netherlands, and Italy. The victims often live in hotels or brothels and can only go out in public under the surveillance of their procurer (pimp). Traffickers often withhold travel and identity documents, threaten the victims and use physical violence.

While international traffickers are increasingly seen as organized crime networks, domestic child labor and sex

traffickers are often related to the victim by blood or ethnic ties. The trafficker might be a distant relative capitalizing on the system throughout West Africa known in Cote d'Ivoire as "confiage" that encourages communal raising of children. The traffickers deceive parents with promises of schooling, money, or an apprenticeship for the child. Parents are often proud to say their child is in Abidjan working or are too overwhelmed by the number of children they have to feed to worry about parting with one. If their child returns with money, they frequently overlook the emotional and physical damage.

According to various sources, persons involved in the transnational trafficking trade are transporters and other traffickers from the countries of origin of the children. There is no information on who may be orchestrating any larger network. Those receiving the victims (especially children) are usually from the same country as the persons being trafficked. The police anti-trafficking department and the police brigade for sexual exploitation are aware of the possible existence of Moroccan and Asian sex trafficking networks. To date they have not fully investigated, citing the extremely closed nature of the Arab and Asian communities in Abidjan, which they report makes it very difficult to infiltrate these communities clandestinely. In 2007 Interpol reported a link between drug trafficking and trafficking in women for sexual exploitation. They noted that Lebanese merchants in Abidjan have heroin trafficking networks that also transport women to Europe for prostitution.

Persons involved in internal domestic trafficking are almost all Ivoirians and are usually known to the children's parents. The traffickers are not known to work in large groups or networks. There are no reports that employment, travel and tourism agencies or marriage brokers are used to traffic individuals. There are no reports indicating that profits from trafficking in persons are being channeled to other persons or entities.

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In 2007 the government continued its efforts to collect data on child trafficking victims. As in previous years, NGOs and government authorities attribute increased identification of trafficked children on the training seminars held in 2006 and 2007 for law enforcement authorities that sensitized police and border officials in identifying and reporting child trafficking. NGOs and government also credit the creation of village level anti-trafficking committees and the work of the National Committee for the Fight Against Trafficking and Child Exploitation (NCFTCE) for the detection of child labor trafficking victims. As a result of increased law enforcement awareness, traffickers have also altered their methods of bringing children into the country in the south, preferring to bring children in small groups or individually on foot at night rather than in large groups by bus or train.

Some traffickers make children de-board buses and cross the border on foot in order to avoid detection by security and defense forces. Once they have crossed the borders, they re-board their buses.

The most vulnerable group for internal trafficking are children from the poorest parts of the country who do not have birth certificates, making it easier for traffickers to conceal their identity. Before the redeployment of the civil administration beginning in June 2007 and the start of the audiences foraines in September 2007 (public mobile courts to issue birth certificates to those over age 13 who were not registered), the lack of government presence in the north meant that children could not receive official certificates. Moreover, in small villages throughout the country, poor, uneducated parents often do not even request birth certificates for their children. Children who have never attended school or have dropped out of school are also at risk. The government refused to administer school exams in the former New Forces-held zone for three years, resulting in

a higher incidence of children not attending school or dropping out. All of these factors make the children of the north especially vulnerable to trafficking. In January 2007, the government administered school exams for the first time since the rebel movement split the country in 2002 and, in August 2007, did so concurrently in the north and south for the first time since 2002.

In 2006, NGOs noted that Cote d'Ivoire became a country of origin for regional child trafficking because of the crisis and increasing poverty. In 2007, there continued to be reports of young Ivoirian girls being sent to Gabon to work as domestic servants.

While in recent years international pressure and press coverage has drawn attention to child labor and trafficking in the cocoa sector, the Ministry of Labor reports that the most common victims of internal trafficking are young girls brought to Abidjan to perform domestic labor. In the cocoa sector, smaller Ivoirian farmers generally use their own children as farm hands while Ivoirians who own larger areas (individually or held communally) either rent land to men from the north, Burkina Faso and other neighboring countries, or employ such men as laborers. Children trafficked to perform labor in the cocoa sector are most commonly found on larger farms cultivated by persons from neighboring countries or distant regions of Cote d'Ivoire who exploit the system of confiage to bring children in from their own countries to work the farms. There were reports of children who, once interviewed apart from the farmers, revealed that, indeed, the farmers were not their real parents, though frequently familial or kinship bonds existed. These complex relationship patterns make it difficult to estimate the overall magnitude of trafficked children in the cocoa sector.

Western Cote d'Ivoire hosts a significant population of refugees and internally displaced children who may be more vulnerable to trafficking and other forms of exploitation. Many children in this region, in order to provide for themselves or their families, do not attend schools and are exposed to an increasing range of situations where they are easily exploited. The traffickers in this region often recruit young girls of their own ethnic group to become domestic servants. Children are also recruited to work in mines or palm oil plantations. The trafficker usually

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receives at least 10 percent of the child's wages.

Many Ivoirians are still grappling with the difference between children helping their parents on family farms, and child trafficking that involves the worst forms of child labor, but the political will to combat trafficking in persons appears to have grown despite the fact that the country's leaders remain preoccupied with the political crisis. The international press first drew the attention of Ivoirians to the phenomenon of trafficking in Cote d'Ivoire with reports of Malian boys working in slave-like conditions on cocoa farms. Today, Ivoirians are much less defensive about negative international reports about trafficking and officials have acknowledged publicly that a problem exists and must be dealt with. This is a welcome change from the previous approach of dismissing negative reports as a way to "discredit" Cote d'Ivoire.

One of the underlying causes of the ongoing political crisis is directly related to how the cocoa sector in Cote d'Ivoire has traditionally operated. "Allogenes" (foreigners and native peoples from the north) form communities in the southern and western cocoa belt on land rented from southerners. Allogene communities often do not have schools or clinics and their children often do not go to school, remain unregistered and in general fall outside the orbit of regular government services. Planters in allogene communities are known to bring relatives, often minors, from their home regions, which frequently have worse conditions of

poverty, to work. Given these factors, it is difficult to classify these persons, both those brought in from other countries as well as the children of the allogene cocoa farmers, in standard trafficking terms.

1C. President Gbagbo and Prime Minister Soro have both stated publicly their commitment to ending the worst forms of child labor in the cocoa sector. The government bureaucracy is trying to address the problem of trafficking but has been given very meager resources to work with. There are nine ministries involved in anti-trafficking efforts with the Ministry of Family and Social Affairs operating as the lead; in 2006, many of these ministries created specific anti-trafficking units. In 2006, the Ministry of Family and Social Affairs created an anti-trafficking unit within the Department of Social Protection. This unit coordinates the National Committee for the Fight against Trafficking and Child Exploitation (NCFTCE). In 2006, the Ministry of Labor and Public Administration created an anti-trafficking unit within the ministry. In 2006, the Ministry of Interior created a Department for the Fight against Child Trafficking and Juvenile Delinquency within the division of criminal police. In 2006 and 2007, this department worked closely with the police unit that focuses on trafficking of women for sexual exploitation (vice brigade). In January 2007 the child trafficking unit took over the child protection portfolio of the vice brigade. In 2005, the Ministry of Agriculture created a unit in charge of coordinating the fight against trafficking, child labor and exploitation in the cocoa industry. Within the Ministry of Education, the Autonomous Department for Literacy handles all the Ministry's trafficking and child labor prevention programs. Within the Ministry of Interior, the prefects and the sub-prefects represent the government outside of the district of Abidjan. They take the lead in all regional and local government anti-trafficking initiatives. In the Ministry of Justice, the Department for Child and Youth Affairs handles matters related to child trafficking.

In 2007 there continued to be greater government engagement in the fight against trafficking. The Ministry of Family and Social Affairs through the NCFTCE maintained a staff of professional civil servants focused solely on child trafficking. In February 2007, the NCFTCE and the Ministry of Family and Social Affairs adopted standard operating procedures for all actors - NGOs, law enforcement officials, etc. - that work in trafficking. The Ministry of Interior maintains the department for child trafficking, child protection, and juvenile delinquency that was created in 2006 within the criminal police division to centralize information received from and activities carried out by the police

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throughout the country. Local government officials, as well as judges, social workers and law enforcement officials, continue to participate in the training workshops offered by Interpol and GTZ, the German government's international assistance agency. In February 2007, the Ministries of Family and Social Affairs and Labor and Public Administration, along with their NGO partners, proposed a bill outlawing child trafficking and the worst forms of child labor. The bill awaits approval by the Council of Ministers.

If the Council of Ministers approves it, the President can sign it into law by decree. Unfortunately, the mandate of Cote d'Ivoire's legislature expired in December 2005 and legislative elections have not been held. The Minister of Justice and Human Rights has stated that he prefers that such a bill be enacted by vote in the National Assembly rather than Presidential decree. In 2007, the government adopted a national action plan to eliminate child labor and trafficking.

1D. The government's ability to address the problem of trafficking is hampered by: lack of training of law enforcement officials and judges, lack of financial resources to NGOs assisting victims and law enforcement officials

charged with investigating and detecting trafficking, corruption, and the absence of a comprehensive anti-trafficking law. Because of the ongoing political crisis and continuing high security-related expenditures, the Government of Cote d'Ivoire faces a tight fiscal situation and lacks the resources necessary to adequately support anti-trafficking programs. Most of the programs carried out by the government in 2007 were funded by international organizations such as the ILO, UNICEF, GTZ and ICI (International Cocoa Initiative). Despite official figures showing modest economic growth in 2004, 2005 and 2006, Cote d'Ivoire has experienced negative net growth since the crisis began in 2002. Moreover, even if positive, recent economic growth has depended on rising oil and gas revenue, which have a limited effect in stimulating employment and broader development. Despite these severe budgetary problems, the government hopes to allocate additional resources to anti-trafficking efforts. In the 2008 budget the government has allocated 4.3 million USD of the 7 million USD needed to implement the Government's national action plan to eliminate child labor and trafficking. The Minister of Labor and Public Administration is asking for an additional 3.7 million USD from international partners.

The government has managed to devote some human resources to various anti-trafficking programs and hopes to strengthen the capacity of law enforcement officials and judges in anti-trafficking efforts. The government continues to send police officers, gendarmes, and other officials to attend seminars hosted by internationally-funded NGOs to learn how to identify traffickers and treat victims. Local officials have participated in the implementation of programs and have also devoted social workers from their offices to neighborhood watch groups and local NGOs engaged in the fight against trafficking in persons. The government has also provided office space to NGOs working on anti-trafficking and child labor issues. Nonetheless, the government still does not have shelters for trafficked children or funding for their care and repatriation.

Few trafficking cases are prosecuted and judges still have not been systematically trained and sensitized to the issue of trafficking and the laws at their disposal. The lack of an anti-trafficking law hampers the government's law enforcement capabilities because many law enforcement officials simply repatriate the children and do not press charges against the traffickers.

Corruption is endemic at all levels of government in Cote d'Ivoire and is also an obstacle to the fight against trafficking. A local NGO reported to the NCFTCE that Nigerian traffickers bribe defense and security forces in order to traffic Nigerian girls into the country for prostitution.

1E. The government monitors its anti-trafficking efforts through the following organs: 1) the National Committee for

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the Fight Against Trafficking and Child Exploitation (NCFTCE); 2) the Ministry of Interior Department of Criminal Police's anti-trafficking unit; 3) the follow-up committee set up to monitor the Mali-Cote d'Ivoire Anti-Trafficking Cooperation Agreement; 4) the National Commission for Child Protection (CNPE) created in October 2005 to serve as a think tank and an implementation body aimed at improving and reinforcing the protection of children against abuse, trafficking and economic and sexual exploitation; and 5) the National Follow-Up Commission set up in July 2006 to monitor the implementation of the July 2005 Multilateral Anti-Trafficking Cooperation Agreement between ten West African countries. The government shares information about its anti-trafficking efforts available through these five bodies and through regional and international organizations. It also publicizes its efforts during events like the World Day against Child Labor on July 31st.



In 2007, the NCFTCE provided training to the 13 local committees it set up in 2006 and early 2007 in villages in Daloa, Bediala, Issia, Bouafle and Asuefry. Additional local and regional committees were set up in other regions with the support of GTZ and UNICEF. These committees are charged with conducting a census of the school enrollment and employment status of all children at risk of being trafficked and informing the NCFTCE through sub-regional child protection committees. The sub-committees are also responsible for reporting cases of children being trafficked from the village. The NCFTCE uses the information collected from the village and sub-regional committees to track domestic child trafficking trends.

The NCFTCE gathers information for their database on child trafficking from the Ministry of Interior through the police (the border police, criminal police and the division in charge of the child trafficking, child protection and juvenile delinquency) as well as the mayors and prefects and sub-prefects who represent the government bureaucracy in the interior of the country; and the Ministry of Family and Social Affairs (social workers and specially trained educators).

### 13. (SBU) INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OF TRAFFICKERS

1A. Cote d'Ivoire does not have a specific law prohibiting or punishing trafficking in persons. There is no specific law against slavery. The government drafted and submitted legislation against trafficking in persons to the National Assembly in April 2002, but it was not adopted before the rebellion took place in September 2002. The mandate of the legislature ended in December 2005 and legislative elections have not yet been held.

The government can prosecute traffickers under the law prohibiting kidnapping of children (Penal Code, Article 371).

The government can also use the law prohibiting the removal (alienation) of a person's freedom (Article 376), receiving or leaving a person as a financial security (Article 377), or imposing labor or a service on a person (Article 378). Mistreatment, torture, and starvation of minors are also punishable (Article 362). These laws are used in trafficking cases. Despite these statutes and some arrests, the government acknowledges that an anti-trafficking law is needed to adequately investigate and prosecute trafficking.

In May 2006, in a study entitled "Legal Study of Trafficking and the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Cote d'Ivoire", the Ministry of Civil Service, Labor and Administrative Reform and GTZ asked a judge to compile all the laws that can be used to try traffickers and those who exploit children's labor. The study highlighted the following laws:

- All the forms of slavery or similar practices such as selling, trafficking children, practicing indentured servitude, bondage, forced labor or compulsory labor are punishable by the Ivoirian Penal Code: Articles 376 to 378 on forced labor or pawning a child;

- Forced recruitment or compulsory recruitment of children

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with a view to using them in armed conflicts is forbidden by the Military Code;

- Using, recruiting or offering children for prostitution purposes, for pornographic films, pictures or spectacles is punished by the penal code, specifically articles 335 to 337 on pimping and inciting minors to vice (sexual exploitation of children);

- Physical violence against minors, depriving minors of food and care, attempt against children's freedom and life,

kidnapping children are punished by the Penal code. Articles 362, 370 and 371 of the Penal Code and the law relating to kidnapping are most frequently used in trafficking cases;

- Article 345 of the penal code punishes physical violence and injury;

- Articles 354 to 360 of the penal code punish sexual violence.

¶B. There are currently no specific penalties for trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation.

¶C. There are currently no specific penalties for trafficking in persons for labor exploitation although there are penalties for forced labor. The government can prosecute traffickers under the law prohibiting kidnapping of children (Penal Code, Article 371) which states that anyone who, without fraud or violence, kidnaps or tries to kidnap a minor can be punished with one to five years' imprisonment and a fine of 50,000 FCFA (111 USD) to 500,000 FCFA (1,111 USD).

The government can also use the law prohibiting the denial of a person's freedom (Article 376) which provides for imprisonment for five to 10 years and fines of 500,000 FCFA (1,111 USD) to 5 million FCFA (11,111 USD) for anyone who enters into a contract in order to alienate, either for free, or for money, the freedom of a third person. The defendant receives the maximum sentence when the person whose freedom has been denied is less than 15 years old.

The government can also use the law prohibiting treating a person as property (Article 377) which provides for six months to three years imprisonment and fines of 30,000 FCFA (67 USD) to 300,000 FCFA (667 USD) for anyone who leaves or receives a person as property, for whatever reason. The prison sentence is five years when the victim is under 15.

The government can also use the law prohibiting forced labor or a service on a person (Article 378) which provides for imprisonment from one to five years and fines between 360,000 FCFA (800 USD) and one million FCFA (2,222 USD) for anyone who forces a minor into a religious or traditional marriage or forces labor on someone.

The government can also use the law prohibiting mistreatment, torture, or starvation of minors (Article 362) which provides for imprisonment of one to five years and a fine of between 10,000 FCFA (22 USD) and 100,000 FCFA (222 USD) against anyone who commits violence against a minor or a person who is unable to protect himself or herself because of his/her physical or mental state, or voluntarily deprives that person of food or care to such an extent as to endanger the person's health.

¶D. Rape is punishable by five to 20 years imprisonment (Penal Code Article 354). The sentence becomes life imprisonment if the perpetrator has one or more accomplices or is the father, an older relative or a person who has responsibility for the victim's upbringing, or if the victim is under 15 years of age. The penalty for statutory rape or attempted rape of either a girl or a boy under the age of 15 is one to three years in prison and a fine of the equivalent of 75,000 FCFA (167 USD) to 750,000 FCFA (1,667 USD) (Penal Code Article 356).

¶E. There is no law criminalizing prostitution. Prostitution is seen as legal as long as it is between consenting adults

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and in private. Soliciting a client is a crime, as is procuring (pimping), even if the prostitute is an adult. Operating an establishment that is mainly for prostitution is a crime. The police brigade charged with combating sexual exploitation uses Articles 334 through 341 to arrest



traffickers and pimps involved in the sexual exploitation of girls and minors (attempts against good public moral conduct).

- Article 334 provides for one month to two years of imprisonment and a fine of 30,000 FCFA (67 USD) to 300,000 FCFA (667 USD) to anyone who engages in commercial pornographic activities and the penalties are double if the offense is committed against a minor.

- Article 335 makes pimping (whoever helps, assists and protects or knowingly protects somebody else who commits prostitution, even if the person is an adult) punishable by one to five years of imprisonment and a fine of one million FCFA (2,222 USD) to 10 million FCFA (22,222 USD).

- Article 336 doubles these penalties if the crime is committed against a person who is under 21; if the crime is carried out with threats, constraint, blows, or abuse of authority; if the offense is committed with a firearm; or committed by the father, mother or any other person having authority over the person.

- Article 337 provides for punishment of two to five years of imprisonment and a fine of 500,000 FCFA (1,111 USD) to five million FCFA (11,111 USD) for anyone who violates good moral conduct by inciting, favoring or facilitating vice and corruption among under 18 years old people of either sex.

- Article 338 provides for imprisonment for 15 days to three months and a fine of 50,000 FCFA (111 USD) to 500,000 FCFA (1,111 USD) to whoever, through gestures, words, written documents or any other means accosts or tries to accost persons of either sex in order to incite them to vice.

- Article 339 provides for two to five years of imprisonment and a fine of one million FCFA (2,222 USD) to 10 million FCFA (22,222 USD) to whoever, owns, runs and finances a building used mainly for prostitution.

- Article 340 provides for six months to two years of imprisonment and a fine of 500,000 FCFA (1,111 USD) to five million FCFA (11,111 USD) to whoever knowingly puts private property at the disposal of persons committing prostitution.

Laws regarding pimping are not well-enforced. While police officers often receive reports of brothels operating with trafficked women and children, they say that they are constrained from following up on these reports by a lack of vehicles. Police also usually do not have any support to offer victims that they rescue. In late 2007 the Ministry of Interior transferred the responsibility for child sexual exploitation from the Abidjan Vice Unit to the child trafficking unit. Previous police commissioners for both units were sensitized to the issue of trafficking in women and children for labor and sexual exploitation. The current police commissioner in charge of child trafficking and protection does not even acknowledge that trafficking of girls and or women for sexual exploitation is a major problem. NGOs have reported that the security forces often use their position to exploit prostitutes. A local NGO, Movement of Nid, that operates in the Abidjan district of Yopougon, an area frequented by prostitutes and their clients, reports that foreign prostitutes who do not have proper identity documents are often forced to have sex with police to avoid going to jail. There are reports that members of the security forces are also customers of the same brothels that they are charged with dismantling.

1F. In 2007, several traffickers and pimps were arrested and jailed although information on their sentences was unavailable. Very rarely does the government conduct in-depth investigations of cases of trafficking. The police lack the resources necessary, such as vehicles, to effectively do their jobs. There is no information that the government used undercover electronic means to investigate

trafficking (or any other crime) or have offered immunity from prosecution to potential witnesses. There is no procedure, code, or law prohibiting police from engaging in covert operations.

For example, from April 2007 to January 2008, official police records show that a total of 135 trafficked children were intercepted and repatriated and 12 traffickers were arrested.

In August 2007, police arrested the president of the Beninese community in Daloa for trafficking 25 Beninese children for work on plantations. The children were turned over to the Beninese consulate for repatriation assistance.

¶G. The government, with the technical and/or financial assistance of Interpol, ILO, and GTZ provided specialized training for government officials in 2007.

¶H. Cote d'Ivoire signed in July 2005 the Multilateral Anti-Trafficking Cooperation Agreement with nine other West African countries. The agreement calls for cross-border cooperation in the investigation of child trafficking networks and the prosecution of traffickers. At the time of this report, however, there had not been any instances of international cooperation on trafficking.

¶I. The government has not extradited suspected traffickers. To date, authorities arrest, try, and require traffickers to serve their sentence in Cote d'Ivoire before sending them out of the country. The Multilateral Anti-Trafficking Cooperation Agreement calls for extradition to signatory countries. There is no law prohibiting Ivoirians from being extradited.

¶J. There is no evidence that government officials were directly implicated in trafficking. However, there are allegations that many law enforcement and public officials are open to bribery and other types of corruption. No government officials have been directly implicated in trafficking in persons.

¶K. N/A

¶L. N/A

¶M. Cote d'Ivoire is not known to be a source or destination country for child sex tourism.

#### ¶4. (SBU) PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS

¶A. The government does not assist foreign trafficking victims by providing temporary or permanent residency status. Most foreign trafficked children are returned to local representatives of their communities, or are repatriated with the assistance of their consulates, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), UNICEF, or a local NGO.

¶B. In general, the government does not have special centers for trafficking victims. The government seeks the help of local NGOs that have centers and can provide shelter, medical and psychological assistance to the victims.

¶C. The government does not provide funding to foreign or domestic NGOs for services to victims. The government asks international NGOs to give funding to local NGOs that have the capacity to provide services to victims and encourages international NGOs to conduct anti-trafficking campaigns. However, the number of international NGOs and bilateral donors with resources available for anti-trafficking programs is limited due to bilateral and multilateral sanctions in place against Cote d'Ivoire. The government has given both GTZ and BICE a building and free utilities to support their anti-trafficking activities. The government also assigns civil servant social workers to work with the social services NGOs. In Bonoua, the mayor and deputy mayor have assigned their assistants to work with the watch groups and provided

an office and a room to accommodate child victims until they are picked up by an NGO.

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¶D. In February 2007, the government adopted formal procedures for identifying and caring for child labor trafficking victims. The government and larger NGOs like BICE and international organizations like UNICEF and IOM have increased their coordination in the referral process but smaller, local NGOs complain that they do not receive information in time to aid victims and sometimes children flee from police custody. The government is focused on child labor trafficking particularly in the cocoa sector. There is little special attention paid to identifying victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation.

¶E. The government has no mechanism for screening trafficking victims among commercial sex workers.

¶F. Government officials view trafficking as a child protection issue. As such, the priority is to return children to their families whether in Cote d'Ivoire or in a foreign country. In previous years, trafficked children were kept in police custody in centers for young delinquents because the police officers did not have another facility available. In 2007, there were no such reports, but the lack of shelter for victims in police custody until NGOs took over the cases remained a problem. Victims who do not want to be repatriated are not deported and some NGOs provide them with vocational training. Government officials, particularly the police, do not see adults as victims of trafficking since adults are able to give consent to their circumstances or are capable of escape. Trafficking victims are not usually held in detention centers or arrested, but some are prosecuted on a case-by-case basis for offenses such as illegal prostitution or document fraud.

¶G. The government does not encourage or discourage victims from assisting in the investigation and prosecution of trafficking. Usually traffickers are caught "red-handed" so victims do not need to appear in court. In less clear-cut cases, the absence of a law against trafficking complicates the legal procedure and limits the tools available to victims, prosecutors and law enforcement authorities.

There is no witness protection or restitution program. Moreover, foreign victims who are material witnesses in court cases against former employers must leave the country if they cannot find other employment. If the victim is an adult, he can file a complaint. If the victim is a child, the police usually attempt to return him to his family or to a community member.

¶H. No special protection is provided beyond what is normally provided to witnesses in other criminal cases. The government does not run any shelters but it has given BICE a building that BICE has converted into a shelter for children.

However, BICE reports that the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights has been trying to take back the building for the Ministry's use. BICE continues to resist. If shelter or other assistance are needed for victims, the government refers the case to an NGO. NGOs provide food, psychological counseling, medical care and repatriation assistance. If the government requests assistance with repatriation from IOM, IOM and UNICEF usually share the cost. The consular officials of the victims' countries are notified but most embassies provide little if any support for the repatriation of their nationals.

¶I. The government conducted training sessions for government and security officials during the year with the financial and technical support of international NGOs and Interpol. There was continued improvement in 2007 in the law enforcement authorities' attention to child labor trafficking. As a result, routine government reporting of child trafficking

increased. In April 2007, Interpol and GTZ conducted the first of two bilateral training workshops on trafficking for Ivoirian and Ghanaian police officers. The program trained 20 officers in total. The government does not provide training on protection to its embassies and consulates in foreign countries.

¶J. There was no formal government assistance for repatriated nationals who were victims of trafficking.

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¶K. Several international organizations and NGOs work on trafficking issues in Cote d'Ivoire, including Save the Children UK and Sweden, UNICEF, GTZ, BICE, IOM and the ILO. Local NGOs include Afrique Secours Assistance (ASA), the Abel Community, the Movement of Nid, the Amigo Doume Foundation, and Cote d'Ivoire Prosperite. As noted above, the government cooperates with NGOs but provides little material support to these NGOs due to a lack of funding.

International NGOs provide the majority of funding to local NGOs to assist victims of trafficking. Services include counseling, literacy courses, medical care, reuniting victims with their families in Cote d'Ivoire, and repatriating foreign victims.

#### ¶5. (SBU) PREVENTION

¶A. The government does fully acknowledge that trafficking is a problem and, unlike in years past, in 2007 the government was not as defensive about the issue of child labor and trafficking in the cocoa sector. The government at high levels has also taken an active role in publicizing the issue.

¶B. In early 2007, the Ministry of Family and Social Affairs and the NCFTCE set up 13 village level anti-trafficking and child protection committees. They also gave school supplies to 280 at-risk children to allow them to attend primary school. The ministry and the NCFTCE also set up five sub-regional committees. Twenty-five additional village protection committees are being planned.

Using funding from UNICEF and Save the Children, the Ministry of Family and Social Affairs continues to support Community Action Centers for Children (Centres d'Accueil Communautaire Enfantine - CACE) under eight who are not enrolled in school in Abidjan as well as in other towns and villages. The purpose of these centers is to provide care for these children while their parents are working.

The Ministry of Education continues to support the Community Education Centers (Centres Educatifs Communautaires - CEC) established in 2005. The mandate of the CEC is: 1) to receive children removed from the worst forms of child labor in commercial agriculture, in particular the cocoa sector; and 2) to provide basic education for children. In 2007, the Ministry of Education continued to carry out its mobile school program aimed at combating the worst forms of child labor as well as protecting the children working in the sub-regions of Abengourou, Soubre, Oume, Divo and San Pedro.

The National School for Civil Servants, with the help of the ILO, continues to include a course on child labor as part of the curriculum for Workplace Inspectors.

The government continues to contribute funds to the Institute for Women's Training and Education (Institut de Formation et de l'Education Feminine) centers around the country where women can take literacy, cooking, and sewing courses and learn about hygiene and homemaking.

¶C. The government continues to maintain relationships with international and local NGOs involved in anti-trafficking

efforts. The Ministry of Family and Social Services is forthcoming and well regarded for its anti-trafficking efforts with NGOs and international organizations. International NGOs fund most of the activities carried out by government ministries and agencies, local NGOs and Interpol. Most local NGOs and international organizations that are involved in the anti-trafficking fight (except for ILO) are members of the NCFTCE and cooperation is good with larger NGOs. Smaller NGOs have complained about coordination. Since the government does not have shelters around the country, officials often ask local NGOs for assistance in offering shelter as well as medical and psychological assistance to recovered trafficking victims.

1D. The government is unable to adequately patrol its long,

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porous borders. It does not maintain publicly available statistics on border crossings. Additionally, it has remained difficult to know the extent of trafficking across the borders in the northern part of the country, which has remained under the effective control of the NF since 2002. The border police prefer to deny entry into Cote d'Ivoire to children traveling with persons other than their parents, because they often have no place to put them.

However, the Ministry of Interior has instructed police and gendarmes at various border points to arrest persons trying to bring children into Cote d'Ivoire. In June and November 2007, ICI held five training seminars on child trafficking in the cocoa producing regions of San Pedro, Divo, Gagnoa, Guiglo and Daloa for a total of 137 officers of the security and defenses forces (gendarmerie, police, customs and forestry). In August 2007, Interpol with the financial support of GTZ, trained 20 police prefects from ten regions in Grand Bassam. In August 2007, GTZ and Interpol also trained 17 members of the union of truckers in Soubre on identifying child trafficking victims. To avoid being apprehended, traffickers sometimes enter Cote d'Ivoire along the coast by boat.

1E. The NCFTCE coordinates the efforts of the various agencies. The government does not have a public corruption task force. In December 2005, then Prime Minister Banny created a sub-ministry in charge of good governance. This sub-ministry was eliminated in the government that Prime Minister Soro created in March 2007.

1F. The government approved a national plan of action to address child trafficking and the worst forms of child labor in November 2007. The plan has a 7 million USD budget designed to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in 50 percent of all industries. Representatives from key ministries played an active role in developing the anti-trafficking action plan, as did several international and local NGOs.

1G. The government has made little effort to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts. In February 2008, the Director of Criminal Police noted to Poloff that the police plan and occasionally execute raids of bars but they have no statistics available.

1H. N/A

1I. N/A

16. (SBU) Mission point of contact is FP-04 PolOff Laura Taylor-Kale. Direct line: (225)22-49-45-70, fax: (225)22-49-40-20 or email: Taylor-KaleLD@state.gov.

17. (SBU) Poloff spent approximately 60 hours on the 2008 TIP report. PolFSN Specialist spent approximately 20 hours on the 2008 TIP report.  
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